“Prestigious Brits and Dynamic Americans”

Dutch EFL students’ language attitudes towards four varieties of
British and American English

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Abstract

In an attempt to revive the experimental investigation of language attitudes, this thesis employs methodologically innovative elicitation techniques to extract language attitudes with respect to four varieties of English: Received Pronunciation, General American, non-standard British English and non-standard American English. 46 well-educated students who speak English as a foreign language took part in a speaker-evaluation experiment and were asked to determine to which extent they associated 8 speech samples (2 for each of the investigated varieties) with pictographic representations of either Superiority (conservative prestige), Dynamism (modern prestige) or Personal Integrity (all well-known dimensions along which language attitudes vary). As expected, all varieties of American English were deemed more Dynamic, whereas varieties of British English were regarded as more superior. Crucially, non-standard British English was upgraded in terms of Integrity whilst non-standard American English was slightly downgraded when compared to their standard counterparts. This study has obvious implications for educational policies pertaining to the preferred variety of English to be used in L2-contexts: while British English is currently the only advocated variety in the Netherlands, a larger focus on linguistic diversity is a key issue.

Keywords: Language attitudes; Dutch; English; varieties; speaker-evaluation; standardness; language ideologies
**Introduction**

One typically overlooked quality of spoken language is that it is not merely a way of conveying information, but also a powerful social meaning making tool. National and regional accents, more particularly, can reveal a lot about speakers. To illustrate this statement, Luu (2017) reviews the 2015 US-made Jaguar Ad in which distinctly British actors such as Tom Hiddleston and Ben Kingsley “embrace the inevitable dark side of their national identity” in conforming to the idea that British English (in this thesis: Received Pronunciation, hereafter RP) seems to be the prestige accent of villainy (Luu, para. 1). At the same time, however, these actors also star in roles in which they are the epitome of refinement and elegance: intelligent, authoritative and generally indexing a higher socioeconomic class. Meanwhile, in the United States, a different sort of prestige renders American English the desired variety for pop, rock, country, R&B and so forth. Luu indicates in this respect that countless British artists from Adele to Led Zeppelin seamlessly code-switch into American accents when performing and back to their own accent when they are not (Luu, para. 4.). In other words, whereas there appears to be a tendency of assigning a higher level of sophistication to the British English accent, there seems to be an alternative type of prestige indexed by American English, which is connected to an image of trendy, modern and media-cool Americans.

The attitudes Dutch people may have with respect to this phenomenon are interesting to consider, as English is not only spoken as a second language by virtually all inhabitants of the Netherlands, but there is also a special place for the English language in the education system. In 2012, the European Commission dispatched a survey on foreign language statistics in Europe in which 90% of Dutch respondents claim they speak English well enough to be able to have a conversation (European Commission, 2012, p. 22). This percentage is entirely credible given the fact that English plays a very crucial and prominent role in the daily lives of the Dutch. In the later stages of primary education as well as throughout secondary education
in the entirety of the Netherlands, English is a compulsory foreign language (Nejjari, Gerritsen, Van Der Haagen & Korzilius, 2012). In addition, as a result of the introduction of bilingual education (Dutch: *tweetalig onderwijs* or *TTO*), more students are receiving their secondary school education either fully or at least half in English. Because of the growing numbers of international students, Dutch universities are readjusting their language policies which gives rise to the development more courses and even entire bachelor and master programmes in English. As of the academic year 2017-2018, 26% of Radboud University’s bachelor programmes and a staggering 62% of master programmes are taught fully in English. This development has however recently come under fire, as the current Dutch Minister for Education, Culture and Science reproaches universities for the rise of English-taught programmes under the guise of recruiting as many (international) students as possible.

But which varieties of English are taught in this rapidly Anglicising academic landscape? Henderson et al. (2012) conducted a European-wide survey of English pronunciation teaching practices. They showed that teachers of English from seven European countries claimed to use the so-called standard British RP variety in their classroom, whilst students either preferred or equalled General American (hereafter GA) with RP. Their research, therefore, exhibits an ideology that motivates professional L2-speakers of English to adopt an RP accent, in spite of the fact that GA is visibly making inroads into younger learners’ preferences. A reason for the latter may be the increased use of internet both in teaching and in learners’ leisure activities (Henderson et al., p. 21). The RP English first and foremost-ideology is also emblematic of the English language situation in the Netherlands, as RP is the principal variety that is taught in education whereas GA is more dominant in television, film and music due to the high vitality of American culture (Van Der Haagen, 1998; Ladegaard, 2006).

The decision to subdue varieties of American English, as ubiquitous as they are in their occurrence all over the media and television, may be regarded as an odd remnant of neo-
colonial thinking. With a third of the world’s population speaking English, as estimated by Crystal (2006), it is strange that educational thinking fixates its view of English to the high prestige standard variety of the nation where English was born. Since it may be worthwhile to revise some of the educational policy with respect to EFL in the Netherlands, we attempt to provide a scientific basis for such a revision in this study. Building on our data, the authors of educational policy and English course curricula may consider updating their materials to align teaching practice somewhat more with learner preferences.

Similarly, not much attention is given to non-standard varieties of English in educational curricula, despite English conceivably being the most linguistically diverse language in the world. In a Dutch context, previous research has already found evidence for the penetration of Dutch regional pronunciation characteristics in the speech of Netherlandic Standard speakers, which accounted for the rise of commonly accepted regional language varieties (Smakman, 2006; Van Hout et al., 1999, cited in Grondelaers, Van Hout & Steegs, 2010, p. 102). It has also been shown that the Dutch attribute higher prestige yet low solidarity scores to the Dutch standard, whereas the opposite pattern persists for non-standard varieties (Heijmer & Vonk, 2002; Impe & Speelman, 2007, cited in Grondelaers et al., 2010, p. 102).

Whilst these studies show that the Dutch are tolerant towards other Dutch non-standard regional varieties, no experimental studies of the Dutch evaluation of non-standard regional varieties of English exist to my knowledge, constituting a gap in the scientific literature on this topic. It is however interesting to examine whether the Dutch are also tolerant towards non-standard varieties of English, a language that is omnipresent in Dutch society. Next to that, little research has been done on Dutch language attitudes towards English that measures the impact of the complimentary distribution between modern prestige (Dynamism) and conservative prestige (Superiority) over varieties of English, let alone that recent research has
incorporated the methodological progress that recently has been made within the field of language attitudes.

The aim of this thesis is twofold. It initially intends to solve the prestige-paradox that shrouds American and British English by means of differentiating between two types of prestige: old or overt prestige and new or covert prestige, so-called dynamic prestige, in order to advance the study of language attitudes among native speakers of Dutch. The question the present study therefore initially aims to answer is whether Dutch EFL students attribute more Superiority and/or Dynamism to speakers of British English or American English varieties. Secondly, this thesis aims to assess what effect the standardness of a speakers’ accent may have on the evaluation of a variety and how regional, non-standard varieties compare to standard varieties of English. The following hypotheses are put forward for empirical testing:

1. Varieties of American English are attributed more Dynamic (modern) prestige, whereas varieties of British English are attributed more Superior (conservative) prestige by highly educated Dutch EFL students.

2. Highly educated Dutch EFL students will be tolerant towards non-standard varieties of English and will have high regard for them in terms of integrity.

In order to provide an answer to the research question and affirm the hypotheses, chapter 1 reviews relevant literature in the field of language attitudes. In chapter 2, the methodology of the present study will be elucidated, while chapter 3 enumerates the experimental findings. In the final chapter, the experimental results, as well as their limitations and implications, will be discussed.
Chapter 1: Theory and background

1.1 Language attitude research

Research into language attitudes is a relatively new field of study, stemming from the 1960s. Prior to the development of the field itself, language attitudes were considered to be irrelevant as the prevailing behaviourist approach merely considered language to be a set of behaviour and denounced language as cognitive or mental activity (McKenzie 2010). McKenzie explains that the term *language attitudes* is an umbrella term which “encompasses a broad range of possible empirical studies, concerned with a number of specific attitudes” (McKenzie, p. 26). McKenzie reports that Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner and Fillenbaum (1960) conducted the first empirical experiment into language attitudes, which constituted the beginning of a change in the field and helped enormously in establishing sociolinguistics as a distinct field of study. Despite this, William Labov is considered to be the preeminent founder of variationist sociolinguistics. He laid the groundwork for studying language in an indirect and natural social context in his New York City department store study by making use of “rapid and anonymous elicitation techniques” (Labov, 1972, p. 168)

Grondelaers, Van Hout and Steegs (2010) note that there has recently been a sentiment of declining interest in the field of language attitudes. They trace this belief to Bradac (1990, cited in Grondelaers et al., 2010, p. 103), who points out that the similarity in methodology and procedures within the field either shows that this consistency proves to be fruitful for yielding desired results or that the field is diminishing. Despite this, Grondelaers et al. believe that “language production changes can only be understood by recourse to how language is perceived” (p. 112). This stagnation in the field is further explained by three reasons as given by Hiraga (2005) and Grondelaers, Van Gent and Van Hout (2016; in press). Firstly, Hiraga points out that the earliest experiments into language yielded extremely uniform evaluation patterns (see for instance Giles et al., 1987; Bradac, 1990; Giles & Coupland, 1991, cited in
Hiraga, 2005). These studies all demonstrated a high degree of consistency, namely showing that standard varieties are rated high on status and competence, yet low on integrity and attractiveness. Rural varieties show the opposite pattern as they are rated low on status but high on integrity and attractiveness, whereas urban accents are evaluated fairly negatively on all aforementioned dimensions. Since these results were so similar, Hiraga argues that researchers became unmotivated to conduct follow-up studies and explore the field further. A second reason is given by Grondelaers, Van Gent and Van Hout (2016; in press) in which they state that subjective factors (viz. perception, evaluation, attitude and ideology) are decreasingly regarded as legitimate driving forces of language change in Labovian sociolinguistics.

In spite of the fact that the canonical methodology to measure attitudes continues to be contested, linguists keep emphasising the significance of studying language attitudes for several reasons. Rickford (1985) transparently argues that language attitude can primarily contribute a great deal to language planning, as insight into language attitudes helps to determine which variety ought to be standardised. On its turn, this may have implications for language policies of educational and governmental institutions (Rickford, 1985). The study of synchronic variation is a second perspective that may benefit from studying language attitudes closely, as it may explain patterns of style-shifting and interference. However, Rickford also argues the importance of studying language attitudes within the domain of diachronic variation so that the occurrence and direction of language change can be explained and analysed. McKenzie (2010) even reasons that language attitudes trigger and contribute to sound changes, but he also states that they play a pivotal role in defining speech communities as a whole. Lastly, Rickford states that language attitudes are also valuable to review within the field of second language acquisition, since they may predict how competent a learner will likely be in its development of a second language (Rickford, 1985).
1.2 Speaker evaluation research and the matched-guise technique

Implicit language attitudes are often studied via so-called *speaker evaluation* experiments as developed by Lambert et al. (1960). In this technique, respondents are asked to rate speech stimuli representing a certain language variety on a number of *semantic differential scales*. These scales allow for the measurement of attitudes or feelings that respondents may have towards a language variety, varying from bipolar adjectives on a scale (e.g. from ‘totally agree’ to ‘totally disagree’). However, when using semantic differential scales one has to bear in mind that every adjective requires an accurate antonym, which is not always the case (cf. words like ‘bashful’ or ‘deceitful’). Experimental design of this nature also often makes use of the *matched-guise technique* as developed by Lambert, et al. (1960). The matched-guise technique is arguably the most well-known variant of the verbal guise technique, which is described by Ladegaard (2006) as “a broad term for language attitude studies that involve recorded speech being presented to listeners who are asked to evaluate a speakers’ social or linguistic characteristics” (p. 107). The matched-guise technique confronts subjects with stimuli of language varieties which they are asked to evaluate on multiple characteristics like intelligence, self-confidence, kindness and likeability. Respondents are unaware of the fact that the passages are all spoken by one and the same speaker who pronounces all varieties involved in an authentic matter. This is crucial for the method since this ensures that the only factor that may influence respondents is the specific language variety, therefore disregarding extra-linguistic factors such as voice quality, content of spoken text and the speaker’s personality. If the same speaker is attributed different traits in various ‘guises’ (i.e. language varieties), the reason for this can be found in the dissimilar language attitudes underlying the traits.

Not only is this technique the first to be coined in language attitude research, it is also used in the vast majority of experiments of this kind, suggesting it to be uniformly appropriate for language attitude research. However, Hiraga (2005) argues this is not the case, synthesising
the critique that is shared by many scholars in the field. The matched-guise technique is in the first place appropriate for research that seeks to analyse attitudes towards accents, but the technique is unsuitable for research that focuses on attitudes towards dialects. Hiraga also mentions that the matched-guise technique is also reproached for being unnatural and artificial since respondents who repeatedly have to listen to a recording of the same content may easily start paying less attention to vocal variation as they tire of the repetition. Hiraga consequently argues that speakers may react to the content of the recording they hear and the potential congruity between the topic of the recording, the speaker and the particular language variety. The last point Hiraga makes is his suspicion of the authenticity of samples if they are spoken by one and the same ‘perfect’ bilingual speaker. Additional points that are addressed by other scholars (Grondelaers et al. 2016; in press) include the fact that scales in matched-guise experiments are semantically not very rich and often do not yield the desired results, as concepts such as dynamism are often too difficult and specific to elicit based on adjectives alone.

Due to the controversial nature of the matched-guise technique and its shortcomings, this experiment employ the verbal guise technique. Biliotti and Calamai (2010) summarise that the verbal guise technique solves numerous problems the matched-guise technique faces. Firstly, the samples are recorded by multiple native speakers, hence there is no requirement of one bilingual speaker who imitates all varieties involved as genuine as possible. Speakers are furthermore recorded in a natural context and an excerpt of free speech is included to disseminate the artificiality of the setting (Biliotti & Calamai).
1.3 Overt and covert prestige

A compelling recent development in the field of language attitude research which is especially relevant for the present experiment is the discovery of a new type of prestige (next to traditional superiority considerations associated with standard language). Although William Labov (1966) was the first to propose a distinction between overt and covert social values in his New York study, Kristiansen (2009) is the principal pioneer who introduced ‘dynamic’ new prestige as an unconscious and covert form of prestige, which has to be considered separately from overt social values and stereotypes. Whilst language attitude research has often been overt in nature, involving direct interrogation into language attitudes and its meanings, it is far more interesting to unearth underlying language ideologies by means of uncovering “tacit and more deeply held beliefs and predispositions” (Coupland & Bishop 2007, p. 75). These so-called hidden triggers are of essential value and have to be accessed indirectly by means of well-defined methodology and elicitation techniques.

So-called dynamic (also new, modern or covert) prestige is a form of prestige that is only recently included in language attitude research, because it is believed to be the “prime perceptual mover of a number of European destandardizations” (Grondelaers, Van Gent & Van Hout 2016; in press, p. 6). A factor which complicates the extraction of dynamic prestige is the fact that it are so-called ‘hidden trigger’ of non-standard forms that are difficult to access and measure due to the stigma on these forms and the respondents’ unwillingness to evaluate them positively. On a related note, dynamism proves to be a difficult concept to grasp since it has not penetrated people’s evaluative vocabulary yet, which can plausibly be explained on account of its recency (Grondelaers et al.).

In several studies (Grondelaers & Speelman. 2013; Grondelaers, Van Gent & Van Hout, 2015, cited in Grondelaers et al. 2016) dynamism was elicited with a carefully selected set of adjectives, but these did not always suffice to pinpoint the dynamism dimension
unambiguously. Rosseel, Geeraerts and Speelman (2014) account for this by criticising the semantic differential scales on several accounts. Firstly, they argue that the only adjectives that can be graded sufficiently are ones that have an antonym, which is not always conceivable. A second problem is the fact that adjectives need to be chosen with caution and that they preferably have to be adapted to the language community that will be studied. This, on its turn, requires that the adjectives are pre-tested carefully. Since the traditional speech evaluation instrument contains some of the aforementioned problems, an accurate experimental tool that is rich enough to pinpoint the exact nature of dynamic prestige is necessary.

The most recent research into language attitude therefore proposes an alternative method: pictographic measures (Staum Casasanto, Grondelaers & Van Hout (2015); Grondelaers, Van Gent & Van Hout, 2016; in press). The respondents that were selected for Staum Casasanto et al.’s (2015) experiment were asked to associate a standard and non-standard variant of four class-stratified phonetic variables with either one of two pictures representing either high or low symbolic class instantiations (cars, professions, workplaces, physical appearances, and Christian names). The results of this experiment showed that the pictographic measures of economic production, culture and consumption were effective measures that elicited class-based judgments in a Dutch-speaking region. The results of Grondelaers et al. show that all pictographic measures included were confirmed on the dimensions, which demonstrates that “listener-judges evaluate language variants as dynamic on the basis of seemingly unrelated pictures which strongly correlate as conceptualizations of different aspects of dynamism” (Staum Casasanto et al., p. 22). Hence, pictographic measures are proven to be efficient activators of evaluation, as the semantic processing of pictures proves to be far more effective than the semantic processing of words (Grondelaers et al., p. 14, and the multitude of references mentioned there).
The pictures that were used in this experiment are the ones that Grondelaers, et al. (2016; in press) pre-tested. They asked respondents to rate 165 real-life colour pictures that represented dynamic, superior and high integrity instantiations of twenty categories. Respondents were required to rate the pictures on two Likert-statements: “What this picture shows has class, prestige and/or status” and “What this picture shows is dynamic, modern and/or flashy” paired with 7-point Likert scales that identified “not at all” on the leftmost bullet and “very much so” on the right (Grondelaers et al., p. 16-17). Of the twenty categories that were originally included, five categories that had both a prestigious and a dynamic representative with high scores for either variable were eventually selected.

### 1.4 Standard language ideology and non-standard varieties

In their chapter on language ideology and linguistic differentiation, Irvine and Gal (2009) state the following:

A language is simply a dialect that has an army and a navy – so goes a well-known saying in linguistics. Although only semi-serious, this dictum recognizes an important truth: The significance of linguistic differentiation is embedded in the politics of a region and its observers. (Irvine and Gal, 2009, p. 35).

As long as language exists, people from all speech communities have had prevailing stances on which varieties ought to be considered as ‘optimal’, ‘the most beautiful’ or ‘the most prestigious’. Speakers tend to frame ideas they have on a certain language variety and “map those understandings onto people, events and activities that are significant to them” (Irvine & Gal, p. 35). This concept is referred to by linguists as *language ideology*. Speakers of standardised languages are especially responsible for perpetuating such language ideologies, as they tend to take the standardness of their own variety for granted and consider this to be of the highest good (Coupland & Bishop, 2007). In extension of this, language attitude research
generally affirms that standard varieties of a language are attributed more prestige when compared to non-standard varieties. Nevertheless, several studies have examined increasingly progressive developments within these outlines.

Coupland and Bishop (2007), for instance, conducted research into the language ideologies of respondents from the UK and asked them to evaluate 34 varieties of English via basic accent labels. Their findings confirm familiar patterns from earlier research, but they uncovered robust effects by respondent age since younger respondents were visibly less concerned with evaluating standard varieties as prestigious (Coupland & Bishop). Moreover, several non-standard varieties that they studied, such as Standard Welsh English, were deemed as relatively prestigious and the most pleasant-sounding of the varieties that were studied. Accordingly, there seems to be evidence for a younger British generation that is increasingly more tolerant towards regional, non-standard varieties (Coupland & Bishop).

In a Dutch language context, research has shown that the Dutch attribute higher prestige yet low solidarity scores to the Dutch standard, whilst non-standard varieties are awarded less prestige but more solidarity (Heijmer & Vonk, 2002; Impe & Speelman, 2007, cited in Grondelaers, Van Hout & Steegs, 2010). Similarly, Grondelaers et al. (2010) and Grondelaers & Van Hout (2010) have found evidence for increasing tolerance for regional flavouring in Standard Dutch. In Denmark, Kristiansen (2009) has shown that non-standard, modern Copenhagen speech is subconsciously upgraded as the most prestigious variety by young Danes. This is addressed by Kristiansen as a case of “‘covert’ language ideology in language change” (Kristiansen, p. 189).

Whilst the aforementioned studies have shown that there is evidence for increasing tolerance towards regional and non-standard varieties, no experimental studies into the Dutch evaluation of non-standard regional varieties of English exist to my knowledge. This thesis intends to fill this gap and extend Kristiansen’s (2009) conclusion that covert prestige plays a
critical role in language ideology by examining exactly whether Dutch students are more tolerant towards recognisable non-standard varieties of English.

1.5 English in language attitude research
A considerable amount of research has been conducted on native-speaker judgements of English, mostly on standard varieties of English in Anglophone countries (Giles, 1970; Bayard, Weatherall, Gallois & Pittam, 2001; Hiraga, 2005; Coupland & Bishop, 2007). Giles (1970), for example, analysed British attitudes towards 13 accents on various dimensions. His findings confirm the pattern that standard varieties are rated high on status, as RP and affected RP are respectively in first and second place of most prestigious varieties as ranked by Giles’ respondents (Giles). In contrast, accents spoken in industrial areas such as Birmingham score the lowest in terms of prestige. It is interesting to mention that North American was rated as the third highest variety in terms of status, just below RP and affected RP. North American English was the only variety of American English Giles used, whilst he did include six regional and urban varieties of British English next to the RP variants he included. It might very well have been the case that, had he included regional and urban varieties of American English, these would be rated very differently in terms of status.

In Hiraga’s (2005) study, which critically responds to Giles’ (1970), regional varieties of British and American English are included in his speech stimuli. His research is focused on two dimensions: status and solidarity, as he claims they reflect “the important dimensions of social interaction that affect language use” (Giles, p. 292). He criticises Giles for using North American English as a representative for the entirety of Northern America without specifying exactly which varieties of American English qualified for this umbrella term nor elaborating on the specific samples he used. Hiraga’s results show that Network American, the name he gave to the American standard variety he used for his experiment, gained a consistently high
ranking in terms of both status and solidarity. Nonetheless, RP was still unsurpassed in terms of status, despite Network American being ranked higher on the solidarity dimension. The regional varieties Hiraga used, West Yorkshire and Alabama English, are interesting to consider as well. West Yorkshire English was rated low in status, but highest of all examined accents in solidarity, which is in compliance with the general pattern of language attitudes towards rural accents. Alabama English was rated moderately in both status and solidarity, gaining respectively the fourth and third place in Hiraga’s rankings (out of six accents that were evaluated).

Bayard, et al.’s (2001) study is relevant to consider for an Australasian and American context because their findings are not in accordance with those of Giles (1970) and Hiraga (2005). Bayard et al. clarify that RP was the prestige accent in New Zealand and Australia “from the European settlement of New Zealand until well after the World War II” (p. 25). The reason RP was maintained as the prestige variety is explained by Bayard et al. as a case of standard language ideology since the spoken media in Australia and New-Zealand would formerly be intolerant towards non-RP varieties and education was devoted to maintaining RP as the standard. Their findings do not confirm traditional findings like those of Lambert et al. (1960) in which the standard variety RP evoked most status. Instead, American English was rated highest in terms of status and power by New Zealanders and Australians. Despite their focus being on Australasia and New Zealand, Bayard et al. call for more experimental research into the preferred variety by non-native L2-speakers of English, as they believe that the impact of American global broadcast media on language attitudes ought to be investigated (Bayard et al.). They call this phenomenon Pax Americana, which constitutes a “manifestation of the linguistic hegemony” American English varieties have exerted (p. 22). Optimistically, they hypothesise that American English is paving the way towards becoming the global form of English and will replace RP as the prestige variety in the indefinite future.
Apart from native-speaker judgements of English, multiple studies address non-native language attitudes towards numerous varieties of English in an EFL context. Ladegaard (1998), for example, reports on Danish judges who evaluated three British speakers, an American and an Australian speaker in terms of status and competence, personal integrity and social attractiveness. In this Danish context, RP still appears to be the unsurpassed prestige variety in terms of both status and competence and thus reflects evaluation patterns found in previous studies. Listener-judges were also requested to identify the speakers in the second task Ladegaard constructed. The American accent was overall most successfully identified, which is explained as unsurprising considering the dominant position of American film and television in the Danish media (Ladegaard, 1998). A limitation to Ladegaard’s experiment is that he merely shows that British English is considered prestigious, whereas the experiment does not yield results that could explain more dynamic attitudes to American English varieties due to the lack of incorporating dynamism-variables. Ladegaard (2006) conducted another experiment in which he intended to test Bayard et al.’s (2001) hypothesis that American English will become the global prestige variety in a Danish EFL classroom context. In a verbal guise experiment, Ladegaard confirmed conventional tendencies obtained in the majority of British studies, namely that RP was ranked higher than Standard American in terms of both status and competence (p. 100). He therefore found little support in favour of Bayard et al.’s hypothesis since Danish participants merely indicated to be fascinated by American culture and society. They however preferred the RP accent over the American accent in terms of both perception and production.

Rindal (2010) conducted research into the language attitudes of Norwegian secondary school learners towards American and British English. Her results show that British English is associated with status and prestige, whereas American English is associated with what Rindal calls “informality” (p. 248). The Norwegian learners Rindal investigated predominantly
incorporated American English features in their pronunciation, despite most pupils stating they rather aimed for a British accent. If anything, the students he analysed adopted an inconsistent form of English, which was identified by Rindal as a “hybrid form of American and British English” (p. 255). Like Ladegaard (1998; 2006) and Rindal (2010), this study will conduct an experiment into language attitudes of non-native speakers but focus on the Dutch EFL context instead. The reason for this is that it is still unclear what associations these Dutch students may have towards speakers of English varieties.

A study by Van Der Haagen (1998) touches upon parts of this question, despite focusing on production evidence in the emergence of American English features in Dutch learners’ pronunciation. She explains this emergence as hardly surprising given the overwhelming presence of American music, film and TV in the Netherlands (Van Der Haagen, 1998). Her results show that students used American English accentual features in their word list style for 27%, whilst a staggering 40% of these features were observable in conversational style (Van Der Haagen, p. 98). Despite the fact that this study was published twenty years ago, American English is still omnipresent in Dutch society, arguably even more so. It is therefore necessary to show whether this production preference for American features is reflected in Dutch EFL students’ perceptions of American English language varieties. As stated, this experiment reviews production evidence, which describes variation but does not explain it. Therefore, research into the language attitudes of Dutch EFL students towards these American varieties needs to examine whether attitudinal factors can confirm the oft-noted causal link between perception and production (cf. Van Bezooijen, 2001).

Several studies (Bayard et al., 2001; Rindal, 2013) provide either production or perception evidence that Standard American English has paved the way to become the preferred standard and variety in countries such as Australia and New-Zealand, but also in Norway. It is interesting to investigate whether this is also the case in the Netherlands for Dutch
students. Above all, neither of the studies have discussed variables of covert and new prestige with an eye on the recent methodological developments that have been made in the field by Statum Casasanto et al. (2015) and Grondelaers et al. (2016). Research into measures of dynamism may yield interesting new results in terms of language attitudes. It may very well be the case that Dutch students perceive American English as the most prestigious variety in terms of dynamism, despite predominately being taught British English at school.
Chapter 2: Speaker-evaluation experiment

2.1 Speech stimuli

This experiment made use of eight speech stimuli, two for each of the four investigated accents, Received Pronunciation (RP), General American (GA) – the supposed standard spoken in the USA, non-standard British English as spoken in the West Yorkshire-area and non-standard American English as spoken in the state of Oklahoma. The social characteristics of the speakers were controlled as much as possible: all speakers chosen were Caucasian men between 36 and 52 with a detectable, yet not broad accent.

Speech samples were retrieved online via IDEA, the International Dialects of English Archive, which is an archive of primary-source recordings of English-language dialects and accents as heard around the world. Every speaker of IDEA reads the same set text (either “Comma Gets a Cure” or “The Rainbow Passage”) and provides a fragment of free speech. Fragments of 10 seconds from “Comma Gets a Cure” (see Appendix I for the division of fragments per speaker) were selected on the basis of content and prominence of accent, together with my supervisor Stefan Grondelaers. “Comma Gets a Cure” is an “elicitation passage [that] uses … standard lexical set words, allowing the dialect researcher to examine a reader’s English pronunciation across a wide variety of phonemic contexts” (International Dialects of English Archive [IDEA], 2011, para. 1.). We controlled for voice quality and the attractiveness of the speaker’s voice, ensuring that each fragment was carefully cut so that passages were more or less neutral in context and did not include any variables that may predispose listener perception in any direction. However, the results that will be presented show that in hindsight some minor inconsistencies, which will be discussed in more depth, managed to infuse the samples. Stimulus selection was facilitated by the scholarly commentary available for each sample in the database. It was consciously decided not to include passages of free speech, as the scholarly
commentary often stressed how individuals tend to speak less carefully in unscripted speech. Details of each stimulus and impetuses for its selection are presented below.

2.1.1 Received Pronunciation
Students from all over the world who have to learn English as a second or foreign language are often presented with a reference or model accent, which is in virtually all cases RP. Hughes, Trudgill and Watt (2013) explain that ‘received’ has its roots in nineteenth-century understandings, meaning that it was the accent that was “accepted in the most polite circles of society” (Hughes et al., p. 3). Even today, RP remains the prestige accent of the upper strata of English society despite the estimation that at the beginning of the 21st century, a mere 3 to 5 per cent of the English population spoke RP (Hughes et al.). It is reasoned by Hughes et al. that due to the frequent use of the RP-variety on radio and television, RP is the most widely understood of all accents.

England 39 (UKS1): This sample was selected by my pronunciation teacher, Ms. Hedy Kamara1, as a good representation of RP. The 52-year-old man is a Caucasian actor and university teacher from Berkshire. His accent has negligible influences from other varieties that would not be perceived by Dutch students as such, according to Ms. Kamara.

Received Pronunciation 3 (UKS2): This is a recording of Paul Meier, founder of IDEA, who is was born and raised in Britain, yet resident in the USA for much of his adult life. He is a professional dialect coach and Professor of Voice, Speech, Dialect and Heightened Texts at the University of Kansas.
2.1.2 General American

General American (GA) is an umbrella term for a variety of American English that learners predominantly associate with a so-called standardised American dialect (Kretzshmar, 2010). The term itself has received quite some controversy and continues to be debated, as Kretzschmar (2010) criticises the form for not having a basis or historical justification that may form the default form of American English. For that reason, scholars like Kretzschmar prefer the term Standard American English, as it is more neutral and still variable enough for both location and speaker. Despite these subtle differences, this thesis will make use of the term GA, as this term persists throughout research as a commonly accepted baseline that refers to American English as a homogenous accent.

General American 1 (USS1): This recording was contributed by Eric Armstrong, IDEA’s senior editor, teaching voice, speech, dialects and accents at York University in Toronto, Canada.

General American 5 (USS2): Joey Goldes, associate editor at IDEA, produced this recording. He is a private-practice dialect coach with stage credits for several Broadway shows as well as regional theatre, film and television.

2.1.3 Non-standard British English

For the British English non-standard variety, rural accents from West Yorkshire were selected on the basis of their intelligibility as representative of generic Northern English. Contrary to RP, the West Yorkshire accent can be located within the area of Yorkshire and Humber. Dialectologists Stoddard, Upton and Widdowson (1999) typify the general West Yorkshire accent is by pockets of its rhoticity, once common to all types of English. Like many Northern English accents, the vowel in words like ‘goose’ (which is prominently featured in “Comma Gets a Cure”) is pronounced [ʊ]. Next to that, Yorkshire speakers dislike the southern English [ɑː] and prefer a short [a] in ‘half’. Yorkshire speakers also tend to drop the word-initial [h],...
which Stoddard, Upton and Widdowson (1999) observe to be most protuberant in informal speech and amongst speakers of the working classes.

*England 56 (UKN1):* The speaker is a Caucasian, 48-year-old operations administrator from Stainland, a small village in West Yorkshire. He has not lived outside the representative region for longer than six months and there are no other considerable influences on his speech. The scholarly commentary by Paul Meier describes his accent is thickest when reading the scripted text.

*England 57 (UKN2):* This is a recording of a Caucasian, self-employed plumber, from Halifax, West Yorkshire who was 52 at the time of the recording. This subject lived in London for a short time in early adulthood, after which he moved back to Halifax. Apart from that, there are no notable influences on his speech. Paul Meier explains in the scholarly commentary that his accent is conservative in the reading.

### 2.1.4 Non-standard American English

The accent that is spoken in the two non-standard American English speech samples can be identified as affiliated with Southern American English, which on its turn can be divided into various sub-dialects. On the basis of available speech samples, Oklahoma was chosen as representative for non-standard American English. Oklahoma speakers generally harmonise with the popularised phenomenon that is referred to as the Southern drawl, in which front vowels become gliding vowels that cause one-syllable words to sound like two-syllable words (cf. *pit* sounding like /pj(ə)t/ instead of /pit/). Although this phenomenon is in decline with younger generations of speakers, the Southern drawl is still observable in the speech samples that were used for this experiment, since these speakers are in their mid-thirties and forties.

*Oklahoma 15 (USNI):* This speaker is a Caucasian male who is 44 years old at the time of recording and works as an attorney in Oklahoma City where he has lived for most of his life.
Ben Corbett writes that the speaker’s speech is influenced by Oklahoman diphthongs and monophthongs, as well as typical Oklahoma nasal twang.

*Oklahoma 8 (USN2)*: The 36-year-old Caucasian speaker was raised in Bartlesville, Oklahoma and has also spent time in Oklahoma City, Elk City (for four years), Akron and Bluefield. His occupation is not mentioned. Ben Corbett, who wrote the scholarly commentary, explains that the speaker’s nasality is characteristic of Oklahoma accents.

All the stimuli were normalised as much as possible by Joop Kerkhoff² so that the voice quality of each recording was similar in nature. Even after the normalisation process, the fragment spoken by the second West-Yorkshire speaker was of a lesser quality than the others on account of some background noise and deficient articulation.

### 2.2 Measures

The five pictographic measures that were chosen can be divided into five categories: restaurants, concerts, lamps, couches and workplaces. The 13 pictures that had been pre-tested by Grondelaers et al. (2016; in press) were ultimately included in the questionnaire. The prestigious samples of the couch, concert, lamp and restaurant are images representing high birth, income and education as well as a conservative outlook on life (see Appendix II for a complete overview of all pictures that were used in the questionnaire). These pictures include an antique Chesterfield couch, the main auditorium of the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, a colossal ballroom chandelier, the restaurant of the London Savoy Hotel and an oak-panelled lawyer’s office. The dynamic representatives of these categories consist of a bright red design couch, a concert setting with jazz musicians, a ‘Tradfri’ design lamp from IKEA and a hip sushi restaurant. Next to prestigious and dynamic representatives, four pre-tested images representing personal integrity were included: a man helping a senior citizen, a stray dog on a
cosy couch, a family enjoying their meal in a restaurant and the enthusiastic cast of a musical. Integrity was included in view of the oft-noted inverse correlation between prestige and integrity, as language varieties that are rather as prestigious are rated lower in integrity and vice versa (see Hiraga, 2005, and the multitude of references there).

2.3 Respondents

131 listener-judges reacted to my call for participants that I distributed via social media and personal encouragement, but out of the 131 respondents, only 48 listener-judges qualified in terms of age, study background and nationality completed the experiment. The answer of two of these respondents on the debriefing question suggested they had guessed the experiment’s empirical purpose. These two respondents were subsequently rejected from the analysis.

Of the remaining 46 listener-judges, 14 were male and 32 were female (which is more or less representative of the gender distribution at the Dutch faculties of Arts). This is an approximate 2:1 ratio of women to men and can thus be observed as gender imbalance as a result of the respondents reflecting my own personal network. Notwithstanding, this study did not attempt to ascertain gender effects within the speaker evaluations, so the gender imbalance is negligible. The respondents’ ages varied from 18 to 26 with an average of 21.2 years. It was stressed in the terms and conditions of participation that it was important that listener-judges were students who did not have a background in linguistics (of Dutch or any other specific language). All listener-judges participated on a voluntary basis and were required to agree with the general terms and conditions and the fact that their data would be used for research.
2.4 Procedure and task

For this experiment, I developed an online questionnaire via Qualtrics software available to RU students (see Appendix III for the complete questionnaire). Detailed instructions were provided before respondents commenced the experiment; listener-judges were requested to find a quiet space and make sure they had ear- or headphones available. It was explained that political correctness did not play any role in their evaluations, that there were no right or wrong answers and that the questionnaire had to be completed as quickly yet accurately as possible. Listener-judges were asked to evaluate the extent to which they associated the pictures they saw with the speech fragment they heard, continuously being asked to associate the speech they heard with the image they saw. Their answer was elicited on a seven-point bipolar Likert scale. The leftmost bullet and rightmost bullet were respectively identified as “not at all” and “to a great extent”. The order in which pictures were administered was the same for every sample, but the speech fragments appeared in random order to the respondent via the randomisation function in Qualtrics. At the end of the experiment, students answered some demographic questions on their field of study, gender and age. There was also a debriefing question on an open response item which asked students what the experiment’s purpose was. Lastly, respondents answered to what extent they admire British and American culture on a seven-point bipolar Likert scale. In order to control for exposure, participants also had to indicate their time of residence in either the United Kingdom or the United States. There were no respondents who visited the UK or USA for longer than 2 months and most respondents merely visited either of the two countries on a (short) holiday (holiday in the UK: n=35; holiday in the US: n=12).
Chapter 3: Results

3.1 Identifying the nationality of speakers

Respondents were asked to report on the nationality of the speaker they heard in the fragment as specifically as possible in an open-response item in the questionnaire. To assess how accurately respondents answered this item, a manual score was given varying from 0 to 2 in which 0 points were attributed to respondents who either gave no answer or put a question mark in their answer. If a listener-judge made poor matches, that is locating a speaker outside of its country of origin (e.g. locating the RP-speaker as a Scottish speaker), he or she also received 0 points. Respondents received 1 point when they correctly estimated the speaker’s country in general and two points when they provided specific (correct) details about the speaker’s region (e.g. assessing the West Yorkshire speakers as Northern English).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General American I</td>
<td>USS1</td>
<td>1,18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General American II</td>
<td>USS2</td>
<td>1,22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received Pronunciation I</td>
<td>UKS1</td>
<td>1,43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received Pronunciation II</td>
<td>UKS2</td>
<td>1,63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma I</td>
<td>USN1</td>
<td>0,96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma II</td>
<td>USN2</td>
<td>0,85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Yorkshire I</td>
<td>UKN1</td>
<td>0,69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Yorkshire II</td>
<td>UKN2</td>
<td>0,83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Mean scores of identification of varieties by Dutch respondents (n=46)
Table 1 charts how well the location of each variety was assessed by the Dutch respondents, presenting the mean scores for each variety. The table shows that the two standard varieties, regardless of the speaker’s nationality and whether it was speaker 1 or, are easily identifiable by respondents. Contrary to Ladegaard’s (1998) participants who identified the American accent most straightforwardly, the respondents in this experiment located RP the best. The table also shows that non-standard accents, whether American or British, are considerably more difficult to recognise by Dutch respondents. It must be noted that 46% of the respondents identified UKN1 as Scottish, which shows that the Dutch tend to associate Northern English accents with what they believe to be Scottish accents. UKN2 was also often identified as Scottish (17%), but also as Irish (19%) and Welsh (11%), which explains why most respondents received 0 points in locating these speakers and why non-standard British accents consequently received a lower overall mean score. Even though strictly speaking the localisation of the non-standard British accents as Scottish is incorrect, there is a case to be made for the flexibility of the Northern accent to include Scottish. Especially in locating the American speakers, respondents remained too general in their answer and rarely included details. This resulted in 54% of the respondents receiving 1 point for their estimation.

3.2 Principal component analysis
In order to reduce dimensionality in the ratings and to verify whether listener-judges evaluate British and American stimuli on both a conservative and modern prestige dimension, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was performed on the data using the SPSS factor analysis procedure (factor selection criterion eigenvalue > 1 with varimax rotation and Kaiser normalisation).
## Rotated Component Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DynamicCouch</td>
<td>.678</td>
<td>.234</td>
<td>-.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DynamicLamp</td>
<td>.851</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>-.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DynamicMusic</td>
<td>.666</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DynamicRestaurant</td>
<td>.802</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>.099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IntegrityDog</td>
<td>.150</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>.745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IntegrityJob</td>
<td>.179</td>
<td>.197</td>
<td>.698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IntegrityMusic</td>
<td>.824</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IntegrityRestaurant</td>
<td>.677</td>
<td>.122</td>
<td>.306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SuperiorCouch</td>
<td>-.053</td>
<td>.757</td>
<td>.407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SuperiorMusic</td>
<td>.311</td>
<td>.750</td>
<td>.062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SuperiorLamp</td>
<td>.205</td>
<td>.854</td>
<td>-.076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SuperiorRestaurant</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>.894</td>
<td>-.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SuperiorWorkplace</td>
<td>-.053</td>
<td>.776</td>
<td>.335</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Extraction Method:
Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

### a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

**Table 2.** Factor loadings for 13 measures on 3 principal components after varimax rotation

A first PCA yielded a clear three-component solution in which the picture of the musical (*DynamicMusic*) and the picture of the family restaurant (*SuperiorCouch*) loaded on both component 1 and 3 (which will later be identified as Superiority and Integrity respectively). This analysis with two double-loading pictures accounted for 66.5% of the variance in the data. All the pictures representing dynamism were mapped in the first component, which can unambiguously be identified as Dynamism. Two pictures that were included in function of integrity (*IntegrityMusic* and *IntegrityRestaurant*) also loaded on the Dynamism component, however. On the second component, which could unambiguously be identified as Superiority, all pictures that were intended to load on this component were
mapped. The third component, which can straightforwardly be identified as Integrity, mapped the pictures that were expected to load on this component with the exception of the two traits that previously loaded on Dynamism. This solution with 13 traits and their loadings on the three principal components is presented in Table 2.

3.3 Dynamism

One-way ANOVA with Greenhouse-Geyser correction was used to determine the significance and size of the differences between the sample scores. On the Dynamism-dimension, there was a significant main effect of country ($F(1,45)=16.55$, $p<.001$): American accents ($M=2.60$, $SD=1.39$) scored higher than British accents ($M=2.07$, $SD=1.02$): this could be considered a medium size effect ($\eta^2_p=.27$). In spite of what the figure suggests, no significant interaction between country and standardness was established. A visual representation of this can be seen in Figure 1.

![Figure 1](image)

**Figure 1.** A graphic representation of the estimated marginal means of Dynamism.
3.4 Superiority

On the Superiority scores, there was a significant effect of speaker group on superiority ($F(3.85,173.44)=12.17, p<.005$). This was a medium effect ($\eta_p^2=.21$). Post-hoc tests revealed that standard British speakers ($M=3.57, SD=1.76$) were deemed significantly more superior than other varieties ($M=2.61, SD=1.30$), except for USN2 ($M=3.47, SD=1.42$).

Furthermore, there was a significant interaction effect of country and standardness on the superiority-score ($F(1,45)=49.85, p<.001$); standard British accents ($M=3.57, SD=1.76$) were deemed the most superior, followed by non-standard American accents ($M=3.04, SD=1.38$), then followed by non-standard British accents ($M=2.68, SD=1.37$), and finally standard American accents ($M=2.53, SD=1.28$); this could be considered a large effect ($\eta_p^2=.53$). This is visually represented in Figure 2.

![Figure 2](image.png)

**Figure 2.** A graphic representation of the estimated marginal means of Superiority.
It must be noted, however, that the mean difference between USS1 ($M=2.70$) and USS2 ($M=2.36$) is significant ($p<.05$); the mean difference between USN1 ($M=2.62$) and USN2 ($M=3.47$) is significant ($p<.0001$). Despite both varieties containing two comparable speech stimuli, there seemed to be differences within the guises.

### 3.5 Integrity

There was a significant effect of country on integrity ($F(1,45)=8.50$, $p<.01$); British accents ($M=3.60$, $SD=1.55$) scored higher than American accents ($M=3.19$, $SD=1.45$); this could be considered a small effect ($\eta^2_p=.16$). These findings are assimilated in Table 5.

The mean difference between the first non-standard British speaker ($M=3.47$) and the second non-standard British speaker ($M=4.04$) is significant ($p<.005$). Regardless of what the graph suggests, there is no significant interaction effect between standardness and country.

![Figure 3](image.png)

**Figure 3.** A graphic realization of the estimated marginal means of Integrity.
Some final correlations for the admiration for American and/or British language and culture are to be observed as well. These need not be treated separately as the co-variate of admiration correlates fittingly.⁵
Chapter 4: Discussion

This experiment aimed to assess whether Dutch EFL students attribute more prestige and/or dynamism to speakers of British English or American English varieties and determine what the effect of the standardness of a speakers’ accent may have on the evaluation of a variety. Compared to previous work (Van der Haagen, 1998; Ladegaard, 2006; Coupland & Bishop, 2007), a number of interesting elements stand out. These will be discussed in accordance with the structure of the three components that were mapped via the Principal Component Analysis: Dynamism, Superiority and Integrity.

4.1 Dynamism

It can safely be concluded that there is evidence for American English varieties being rated consistently higher than British English varieties in terms of Dynamism. Accordingly, this thesis provides empirical evidence in accordance with the first hypothesis that is put forward in this thesis, namely that American varieties are considered to be visibly more dynamic than British varieties. In contrast, non-standard varieties are attributed less dynamic prestige than standard varieties, which goes for both British and American varieties.

Strikingly, two images (IntegrityMusic and IntegrityRestaurant) loaded on Dynamism, which was initially unexpected. When taking a closer, retrospective look at the images in correspondence with the aim of this research, the outcome need not be surprising: IntegrityMusic is an image which embodies a hallmark American venture, viz. the modern musical as seen on Broadway and in many films and TV series. Although this measure was initially included in function of Integrity, it can meaningfully be interpreted as a Dynamism attribute of the modern prestige of American English. The same argument could be made for IntegrityRestaurant, which is an image of a typical nuclear family eating in an American-looking diner. This is an image that is continuously perpetuated in TV, film and media and
therefore reinforces the association with contemporary images of American families as a more modern and dynamic image rather than one of integrity. The fact that the common perception people have of Dynamism as something that is trendy, modern and young like the musical and family restaurant can in itself be regarded as evidence in favour of my hypothesis.

Due to the lack of experimental data into Dynamism as a variable in language attitude research, it is difficult to align these results to those of other researchers. On a general note, it can be observed that Dutch EFL students realistically perceive Dynamism as a dimension that is clearly distinct from old prestige (Superiority), which is in line with the findings by Staum Casasanto et al. (2015) and Grondelaers et al. (2016). My experimental Dynamism results align well with Van Der Haagen’s (1998) research into the English pronunciation habits of Dutch students in- and outside a classroom setting. Not only does Van Der Haagen find evidence for American English features in the speech of Dutch EFL learners, she also discovered that they have a generally positive attitude towards American culture and society.

Nevertheless, the results of this experiment provide perception evidence rather than production evidence, which is necessary to explain, rather than describe, the variation that Van Der Haagen (1998) found. In extension, this thesis supplies complementary documentation in favour of the causal link between production and perception as suggested by Van Bezooijen (2001).

4.2 Superiority
Overall, standard British speakers were deemed significantly more superior than speakers of other varieties, yet a number of interesting other findings stand out. Firstly, there were significant Superiority differences within the non-standard American guises. In case of the non-standard speakers, a plausible explanation for these differences can be found within the content of the fragments, as speaker USN2’s fragment contains proportionally more elements that
associate more readily with Superiority. USN2 is recorded speaking the final part of “Comma Gets a Cure”, which is the following:

… either five or six times the cost of penicillin. I can’t imagine paying so much, but Mrs. Harrison-a millionaire lawyer-thought it was a fair price for a cure. (Honorof et al., 2000, n.p.)

It may be the case that respondents focused on content for this speaker, which was in no circumstance fully neutral. If this is indeed the case, it can be concluded that there is a deficiency in the design and that there is no genuine correlation in this context. Secondly, it can be observed that non-standard British speakers are evaluated as significantly less superior when compared to standard British speakers. However, they are attributed more Superiority than standard American speakers.

Similar to what Coupland and Bishop (2007) observe, younger respondents tend to be more tolerant towards stigmatised, that is, towards non-standard varieties. Whilst urban, non-standard UK vernaculars were systematically downgraded by Coupland and Bishop’s respondents in terms of prestige, the Dutch students that participated in this experiment deemed non-standard American varieties as increasingly superior. This was not the case for non-standard British speakers, however, so it is debatable whether these Dutch respondents are actually more tolerant towards non-standard varieties altogether. Similar to the findings of Coupland and Bishop’s study, younger respondents still remain largely negative (mean rating for all dimensions: $M=2.68$), albeit less negative than older respondents in Coupland and Bishop’s study. Moreover, the British standard RP-variety is attributed most prestige of all varieties in this study, which is in line with Coupland and Bishop’s observation of “persistent UK language-ideologies around accent difference that are being reconstituted only gradually and in specific regards” (p. 74).
4.3 Integrity

Overall, British accents were evaluated as more likeable than American accents. Whilst the non-standard British speakers were evaluated as far more likeable than standard speakers of British English, this pattern does not extend to American accents. Since respondents tend to evaluate American non-standard speakers as slightly less likeable than American standard speakers. It must be noted that this may mirror a previous obstacle that has been addressed in terms of the content of the fragment spoken by USN2 which features elements that may be attributed to Superiority yet counter an association with Integrity. Despite this methodological complication, this pattern then confirms the oft-noted correlation between Superiority and Integrity once more (see Hiraga, 2005, and the multitude of references there).

Hiraga (2005) divided the traits he used for his experiment into two categories, respectively ‘status’ and ‘solidarity’, of which the latter category is interesting to bear in mind in light of this experiment because the adjectives Hiraga chose mirror the images that are representative of integrity in this study (cf, ‘friendly’, ‘reliable’, ‘sociable’, ‘sincere’ and ‘comforting’). His analysis discloses that British respondents ranked British and American regional accents, Yorkshire and Alabama English, higher than urban and standard varieties, with the exception of Network American (Hiraga’s version of General American). The claim that non-standard (or regional, in the case of Hiraga’s experiment) varieties are generally attributed more solidarity (or integrity in the case of this thesis) can therefore easily be substantiated, with the exception of the non-standard American speakers.
4.4 General discussion

In terms of methodology, the technique that is introduced by Staum Casasanto et al. (2015) and Grondelaers et al. (2016) once again verifies to be an efficient approach that is able to elicit covert prestige and dynamism very well. Not only did the Principal Component Analysis that was performed on the data yield a clear three-factor solution, all pictographic measures were confirmed on the three intended dimensions except for two pictures (IntRestaurant and IntConcert) which loaded on Dynamism though they were intended to load on Integrity. Dynamism, then, seems to be a dimension that Dutch EFL students realistically perceive when comparing stimuli to images that conceptualise different aspects of Dynamism.

Some general remarks emerge when considering the questions that were directed towards the admiration of British and American language and culture. Orientation towards the Anglophone world causes an increase in positive evaluations towards Dynamism-variables of all varieties and reinforces the traditional stereotype of positive evaluation patterns towards British varieties. Overall, respondents who took longer to fill out the questionnaire tended to give higher scores for all the components.

The listener-judges in this experiment had visible difficulties with locating the non-standard speakers via an open-response item. Despite possibly being biased due to the general knowledge they had on my study background, assuming my questionnaire would be focused on British speakers only, they also often answered the open-response item with a question mark. Despite this, respondents were able to make clear distinctions between RP and GA.
Conclusion

This thesis aimed to measure whether varieties of American English are attributed more dynamic prestige as opposed to evaluations of superiority that are awarded more readily to speakers of British English varieties (Giles, 1970; Hiraga, 2005; Coupland & Bishop, 2007). In addition to this, this thesis attempted to determine what the effect the standardness of a speaker’s variety may have. Whilst not a lot of research has been conducted in the field of Dutch language attitudes of varieties of English, the Netherlands is an interesting country to examine due to its governmental and educational preference for RP versus the societal and cultural preference that young Dutch students have for GA. Accordingly, this thesis was a first attempt at mapping the language attitudes of young Dutchmen and -women regarding four varieties of English: RP, GA, non-standard British English and non-standard American English. Since research (Coupland & Bishop: 2007, Grondelaers & Van Hout, 2010) shows that other countries show increasing tolerance for regional accents, it was also relevant to review what effect the standardness of one’s accent may have for the evaluation thereof. In summary, the retrieved data validate that Dutch EFL students indeed attribute considerably more Dynamic prestige to all American English varieties, whereas they associate British English varieties with pictographic representatives of Superiority. In terms of Integrity, British speakers are evaluated as more likeable than American speakers and non-standard British speakers are perceived as the most likeable of all varieties involved. The transparent findings of this experiment show that the pictographic measures technique is effective for eliciting Dynamism. Recognising non-standard accents proved to be a complex task for the respondents, despite being able to differentiate vividly between RP and GA.

The findings of this experiment provide support for the first hypothesis that anticipated more Dynamic prestige attributes for American English varieties, whereas evaluations of Superiority were more readily attributed to British English varieties. This confirms that there
is indeed a distinction that ought to be made between overt and covert prestige and that Dynamic prestige is undeniably extant in the language attitudes of young Dutch EFL students. The findings shown in this thesis probably spring from immersion in American culture that young Dutch students experience in their day-to-day lives (Van Der Haagen, 1998; Ladegaard, 2006). This confirmation is interesting to bear in mind in terms of language policy and education, as current curricula generally focus on RP, an ideologised preference which is in stark contrast with students’ personal preferences. If secondary school education were to align its language policy to meet their learners’ preferences, students’ motivations for learning English may increase considerably.

The data collected also largely endorse the second hypothesis that expected high regard for non-standard speakers in terms of Integrity. Especially in the case of non-standard British speakers, it is evident that values of Integrity are more readily attributed to them than to speakers of RP. This pattern does not persist in the American situation, but this may be due to the Superiority elements in the fragment of USN2. If this was indeed the reason for USN2’s high Superiority ratings and low Integrity scores, the correlation between Superiority and Integrity can be corroborated once more.

Even though the results align well with the proposed hypotheses, several drawbacks within this experiment require to be recognised. Firstly, it is unsatisfying that USN2’s fragment contained content which may evoke Superiority rather than Dynamism or Integrity images. A second concern is that the study’s respondent sample (n=46) is quite modest. Even so, the significance of most of the effects proves that the sample was sufficient. Thirdly, despite the questionnaire being rather long already, more pictographic measures per dimension could have aided in ascertaining that the Principal Component Analysis yielded even more stable categories that did not load double on other components. It is important that these images are pre-tested so that they can be properly integrated into future experiments. Lastly, the difficulty
of identifying especially non-standard language varieties was underestimated, since respondents had no directions since they had to provide the whereabouts of each speaker in an open-response item. Future research may solve this by adding a few options that respondents can choose from, without hinting at the experimental impetus.

Future research may do well to evaluate each sample even more critically to receive optimal results with minimal extralinguistic interference. Needless to say, the proposed methodology as introduced by Staum Casasanto et al. (2015) and Grondelaers et al. (2016) proves to be effective for researchers who intend to elicit dynamic prestige without using the contentious matched-guise technique. The pictographic measure technique ought to be developed further and employed in different contexts to see which results it may yield in the future. As research into covert prestige in the form of Dynamism is recent and quite novice, future research may want to revisit previous research on language attitudes and extend this by means of incorporating Dynamism as a variable. Furthermore, future research could explore the exact linguistic variables within each variety that may establish this clear distinction between Dynamism and Superiority and contribute to Dutch students’ language attitudes. It might also do well to uncover which sociolinguistic factors (e.g. gender, region, field of study etc.) contribute to more positive or negative language attitudes towards English. Additionally, it would be interesting to compare the evaluation of students with the evaluation of adults and elderly people, which may uncover compelling differences amongst age groups.

The results of this thesis have practical implications for educational policy in the Netherlands, which ought to be updated to match students’ preferences. This thesis has provided the first steps for the scientific foundation in terms of perception evidence for the high vitality of American culture and society in the Netherlands. This day and age, it does not do well to hold on to linguistic ideologies of the past and reject possible alterations in young learners’ attitudes. Instead, it is high time that the Anglicising educational landscape reflected
the reality of what Bayard et al. refer to as a *Pax Americana* – the linguistic hegemony of American language varieties (p. 25). This linguistic hegemony has manifested itself in the language attitudes of Dutch highly-educated EFL students, yet it remains to be seen just how present this *Pax Americana* is for other nations and generations.
Notes

1. I thank Ms. Hedy Kamara for her time and expertise and helping me find suitable speech stimuli for RP-varieties.

2. I would like to thank Joop Kerkhoff for normalising the speech stimuli.

3. This code was used in SPSS and Excel to increase the legibility of individual columns. The three elements in the code each represent the country, standardness and speaker of the speech sample. USS1 can be subdivided into US-S-1, which means that this speaker was from the US, spoke a standard variety and that he was speaker number 1.

4. My thanks go out to Paul van Gent for helping me analyse the data in SPSS and making sense of all the statistics.

5. There was a significant weak positive correlation between admiration for the US and admiration for the UK ($r=.33$, $p<.001$); between admiration for the UK and dynamism of UK accents ($r=.20$, $p<.01$); between admiration for the UK and dynamism of US accents ($r=.20$, $p<.01$); between admiration for the US and dynamism of UK accents ($r=.15$, $p<.05$); between admiration for the US and dynamism of US accents ($r=.19$, $p<.05$); and between admiration for the US and superiority of UK accents ($r=.20$, $p<.01$).
References


12 from http://www.dialectsarchive.com/oklahoma-8


60(1), 44-51.


Appendix I: Fragments from “Comma Gets a Cure”

England 39 (UKS1): “Well, here’s a story for you: Sarah Perry was a veterinary nurse who had been working daily at an old zoo in a deserted district of the territory…”

Received Pronunciation 3 (UKS2): “Almost immediately, she remembered an effective treatment that required her to measure out a lot of medicine. Sarah warned that this course of treatment might be expensive…”

General American 1 (USS1): “First she tried gently stroking the goose’s lower back with her palm, then singing a tune to her. Finally, she administered ether.”

General American 5 (USS2): “Once Sarah had managed to bathe the goose, she wiped her off with a cloth and laid her on her right side. Then Sarah confirmed the vet’s diagnosis.”

England 56 (UKN1): “She ate a bowl of porridge, checked herself in the mirror and washed her face in a hurry. Then she put on a plain yellow dress and a fleece jacket…”

England 57 (UKN2): “The letter implied that the animal could be suffering from a rare form of foot and mouth disease, which was surprising, because normally you would only expect to see it in a dog or a goat.”

Oklahoma 15 (USN1): “Before long, that itchy goose began to strut around the office like a lunatic, which made an unsanitary mess. The goose’s owner, Mary Harrison, kept calling, “Comma, Comma,”…”

Oklahoma 8 (USN2): “… either five or six times the cost of penicillin. I can’t imagine paying so much, but Mrs. Harrison—a millionaire lawyer—thought it was a fair price for a cure.”
Appendix II: Pictographic measures

The following pictographic measures representing superiority, dynamism and integrity were used:

Dynamism:
Superiority:
Integrity:
Appendix III: Questionnaire

Radboud University

(Lees onderstaande instructies alsjeblieft goed door!)

Beste deelnemer,

Alvast bij voorbaat dank voor het deelnemen aan dit onderzoek. Met dit onderzoek wil ik achterhalen of we ons een beeld kunnen vormen van Engelslalige sprekers die we wel kunnen horen, maar niet kunnen zien (zoals op de radio).

Dit onderzoek is bedoeld voor studenten van de hogeschool of universiteit. Sluit deze enquête alsjeblieft nu af als dit voor jou niet van toepassing is!


Zorg ervoor dat je je in een stille omgeving bevindt en een koptelefoon/oorltjes tot je beschikking hebt zodat je de fragmenten goed kunt horen.

Let op! De audiobestanden zijn helaas niet zichtbaar wanneer je de browser 'Safari' gebruikt.

Je antwoorden zullen volledig anoniem blijven en enkel voor onderzoek worden gebruikt. Door verder te gaan naar de volgende pagina geeft je aan dat je de instructies goed begrepen hebt en dat je ermee akkoord gaat dat deze resultaten gebruikt zullen worden voor wetenschappelijk onderzoek.

Voor vragen of opmerkingen kun je mailen naar a.humphrey@student.ru.nl

Alvast hartelijk dank voor het invullen!

Met vriendelijke groet,
Allysha Humphrey
The following questions were repeated for all 13 pictographic measures and varieties:

"In welke mate associeer je de spraak die je hoort met de afbeelding die je ziet?"

The general questions at the end of the questionnaire:
Radboud University

Wat studeer je?

Wat is je geslacht?

- Mannelijk
- Vrouwelijk
- Overig

Hoe oud ben je? (Vul je leeftijd in in cijfers)

Waar denk je dat dit onderzoek over ging?